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SUBJECT: SOMALI ISLAMIC COURTS DELEGATES IN KHARTOUM EXPRESS
HOPE FOR OPENING TO U.S. (CORRECTION, ADDRESSEES)

REF: KHARTOUM 01477

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. At a chance meeting in Khartoum on June 24, Somali delegates of the Islamic Courts movement asked Emboff to convey their views to the U.S. Government. They argued that, despite perceived U.S. hostility, they were not anti-American, and actually wanted, above all, to open contact with the USG. They expressed appreciation for U.S. support for the Khartoum-brokered ceasefire, and hopes that the U.S. would be officially involved when they return for further talks in mid-July. Denying terrorist links, they repeatedly asked for a U.S./Western fact-finding mission to come to Mogadishu to verify the situation there. One delegation members said they were ready "to forgive and forget." They are "crying for help," another said. END SUMMARY.

Union of Islamic Courts Delegates Seek USG Contact

[1](#)2. (SBU) Embassy officer was seated with a Somali-American friend, businessman Ali Aden, on June 24 at the Hilton Hotel, when they were joined by several members of the Somali Islamic Courts delegation to the Arab League talks then concluded in Khartoum. They said they wished to make their views known to an American official.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The Courts delegation members present were: delegation leader, Prof. Mohamed Ali Ibrahim; Dahir Mohamed Ghelle, said to work in the Somali radio; Ali Addalla Toyo; and Omar Aden Mohamed Ghadi, British-educated and Westernized in manner, said to specialize in foreign contacts for the group.

14 Failed Conferences Later, UIC Builds Popular Support

[1](#)4. (SBU) The Head of delegation, Mohamed Ali Ibrahim, emphasized the Courts' security concerns. For the past 15 years, he said, they have been torn by violent inter-factional conflicts; they have had 14 national conferences, all of which failed. The Interim Government that issued from the Nairobi Conference is warlord-controlled but very weak, he said, controlling only a small territory. The Islamic Courts, in contrast, are a traditional institution, focused on law and order, and have won widespread popular support.

UIC Seeks to Cooperate with USG, Restore Stability

[1](#)5. (SBU) The current warlord coalition claims U.S. support, Ibrahim said, in an alliance against alleged terrorists in Mogadishu, which has been bombarded. To fight terrorism,

however, there is a need for government, courts, security. That, he said, is their concern. They want to restore the education and health facilities that have been destroyed, disarm militias, and combat piracy and trafficking. They are "ready to cooperate with the U.S. and other countries." They hope that potential foreign partners will change their minds.

16. (SBU) Ibrahim said they had had no other contacts with U.S. officials, apart from sending several letters that have gone unanswered. They have heard of the U.S. expression of support for the Khartoum ceasefire agreement, and are "very grateful" for that. There is a follow-up meeting here on July 15. The U.S. has backed creation of a Contact Group, and they appreciate this initiative. They are looking for U.S. signals that it wants direct contact - they hope for this.

UIC Hopes Khartoum Talks Lead to New Government

17. (SBU) This theme was strongly echoed by Omar Aden Mohamed Ghadi, after the other three delegates withdrew. The delegation had met with many embassies in Khartoum, he said, including the German ambassador, and the Courts delegates had repeatedly asked to be put in touch with the U.S. They expect the July 15 meeting to give rise to a new government, perhaps incorporating a few persons from the current Transitional Government. It will be a pivotal time, when the U.S. should be present and play a guiding role. They really want the Americans to be there, he said.

18. (SBU) The two other members of the group, Ali Addalla

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Toyo and especially Dahir Mohamed Ghelle, seemed more guarded. Both noted more negative feelings towards the U.S. in Somali in recent years, with Ghelle pointing to the suffering caused by U.S. restrictions on informal money transfers (barakat) and various Islamic charities, and by U.S. support for the warlords. At the same time, when the U.S. restrained Ethiopia from attacking recently, crowds "demonstrated in favor of Bush." It is "time for a new U.S. policy," Ghelle said. On their side, they "can forgive and forget."

USG Should Come to Mogadishu and See Situation First-Hand

19. (SBU) Toyo acknowledged and appealed to American principles of justice and rights. If the U.S. has suspicions of terrorism, they should come to Mogadishu and inspect. If U.S. money could be put to investigations and to cooperation instead of to arms, it could solve the situation there, he said. They hope for a breakthrough in relations with the U.S. because of this contact tonight.

HUME